



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Reminder of Spring Bear Activity in Grand Teton National Park

Acting Superintendent Ralph Tingey reminds local residents and visitors to be alert for signs of bear activity within Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. This is the time of year when bears begin to emerge from their winter dens and appropriate precautions for traveling in bear country should be taken accordingly. Historically, adult male bears emerge from hibernation by mid March. Recently, bear tracks have been sighted in the vicinity of Berry Creek, in the northern portion of Grand Teton.

When bears come out of their winter dens, they begin to search for any food source that helps restore depleted fat reserves after hibernation. Winter-weakened animals and winter-killed wildlife carcasses provide an immediate source of protein and are vigorously defended by hungry bears. As snow banks recede, bears also dig up and eat burrowing rodents and spring wildflowers. Female bears, accompanied by their cubs, emerge later in the spring and are especially protective of their young. **Do not approach a bear under any circumstances.** This is particularly important for situations involving bears with cubs, or bears near a carcass.

When traveling in bear country, precautionary measures should include carrying pepper spray and keeping it easily accessible to use. Take time to become familiar with the proper handling of pepper spray and remember that it is not a substitute for being alert and exercising good judgment and safety practices, such as making noise and traveling in a group - not alone - while in the park's backcountry.

Visitors should report any bear sightings or signs to the nearest visitor center or ranger station as soon as possible. This timely information will assist park staff in keeping bears away from unnatural food sources. Access to human food habituates bears. Habituated animals often lose their fear of humans, which threatens the safety of both park visitors and the bears themselves. Park visitors are reminded to keep food, garbage and other odorous items unavailable to bears by either storing attractants inside vehicles or disposing of garbage in a bear-resistant trash can or dumpster.

For further information on spring conditions and bear activity in Grand Teton National Park, call 307/739-3300.

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